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GENERAL RULES
FOR
PUNCTUATION
AND FOR
THE USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS

BY A. S. HILL
BOYLSTON PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND ORATORY IN
HARVARD COLLEGE

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PUNCTUATION.

GOOD sense determines the relations, whether of thought or of language, which marks of punctuation indicate: it is, therefore, the guide to correct punctuation.

Since punctuation is one of the means of communication between a writer and his readers, it must vary with thought and expression: Sterne's punctuation must differ from that of Dr. Johnson, and, though in a less degree, Burke's from that of Macaulay. Hence, no one writer—even were books printed correctly, as is rarely the case—can be taken as a model. Hence, too, a system of rules loaded with exceptions, though founded upon the best usage and framed with the greatest care, is as likely to fetter thought as to aid in its communication.

Assistance may, however, be obtained from a few simple rules illustrated by examples: but it must be borne in mind that these rules, elementary as they are, may sometimes be violated in order to avoid am-

bigness or obscurity ; for the purpose of every point is to *indicate to the eye the construction of the sentence* in which it occurs, and rules and examples under them are useful only in so far as they explain and illustrate the ways in which this purpose may be effected. He who has mastered the fundamental principles of construction will punctuate far more correctly than he who follows a set of formulas, without regard to the reasons on which they are founded.

I.

Some rules are common to speaking and to punctuation : but the former is directed to the *ear*, the latter to the *eye* ; and the pauses required by the ear do not always correspond with the stops required by the eye. A speaker is often obliged to pause between words that should not be separated by marks of punctuation ; the current of emotion may hurry him over places at which marks of punctuation would be indispensable : he has inflection, emphasis, gesture, in addition to pauses, to aid him in doing what the writer has to do with stops alone.

II.

Beware of using the comma, the dash, or any one point, exclusively or to excess. Every point has some duties which no other point can perform.

III.

Never put a comma [,] before or after conjunctions, such as *and*, *or*, *nor*, *but*, *yet*, when employed to connect two words belonging to the same part of speech and in the same construction (*a*), or two expressions used as if they belonged to the same part of speech (*b*). A point is, however, required between two clauses connected by a conjunction, in order to preclude the supposition that the conjunction connects the words between which it stands: if the sentence is a short one, and the clauses are closely connected, a comma is sufficient (*c*); in other cases, a semicolon or a colon is required (*d*).

(*a*) In the nature of things, greatness *and* unity go together.

(*a*) Sink *or* swim, live *or* die, survive *or* perish, I give my hand *and* my heart to this vote.

(*a*) A just *but* melancholy reflection imbittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments.

(*a*) This was regarded as neither strange *nor* improper.

(*b*) The new order of things was inducing laxity of manners *and* a departure from the ancient strictness.

(*c*) Those who held republican opinions were as yet *few*, *and* did not venture to speak out.

(*c*) The head and body were placed in a coffin covered with black *velvet*, *and* were laid privately under the communion table of St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower.

(*c*) I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a single spider could furnish; wherefore I destroyed *this*, *and* the insect set about another.

(*c*) There was a lock on the *door*, *but* the key was gone.

(*c*) Learn to live *well*, *or* fairly make your will.

- (c) The lock went *hard*, *yet* the key did open it.
- (c) He smote the rock of the national *resources*, *and* abundant streams of revenue gushed forth. He touched the dead corpse of the Public *Credit*, *and* it sprung upon its feet.
- (d) See XVI.

IV.

A comma is used between words belonging to the same part of speech and in the same construction, when they are *not connected by a conjunction* (*a*) ; or when there are *more than two* such words or expressions (*b*), even though a conjunction is *put before the last one* in the series (*c*), unless the word or expression following the conjunction is more closely connected with the word or expression immediately preceding it than with the other words in the series (*d*). If the conjunction is *repeated before each word* or expression in the series, usage varies ; but it may be laid down as a rule that the comma should be *omitted where the words between which the conjunction stands are closely united in meaning* (*e*), but should be *inserted where they are not so united* (*f*).

- (a) His trees extended their *cool, umbrageous branches*.
- (a) Kinglake has given Aleck a *great, handsome** chestnut mare.
- (b) These are no mediæval personages; they belong to an *older, pagan, mythological world*.
- (c) The philosophy of Bacon, Descartes, Bayle, *and* Locke.
- (c) It is the centre of trade, the supreme court of fashion,

* No comma here, because the writer is speaking, not of a mare that is handsome *and* chestnut, but of a chestnut mare that is handsome.

the umpire of rival *talents*, and the standard of things rare and precious.

(d) I have had to bear heavy rains, to wrestle with great storms, to fight my way and hold my own as well as I could.

(e) There speech and thought and nature failed a little.

(e) We bumped and scraped and rolled very unpleasantly.

(e) & (f) I sat and looked and listened, and thought how many thousand years ago the same thing was going on in honor of Bubastis.

(e) & (f) And feeling all along the garden wall,

Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,

Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed.

(f) For his sake, empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed.*

V.

Use the comma between two clauses, one of which depends on the other (a) : omit the comma, however, if the clauses are intimately connected in sense and construction (b).

(a) Though herself a model of personal *beauty*, she was not the goddess of beauty.

(a) Had a conflict once begun, the rage of their persecutors would have redoubled.

(a) If our will be ready, our powers are not deficient.

(b) The Board may hardly be reminded that the power of expending any portion of the principal of our fund expired at the end of two years.

(b) And loved her as he loved the light of Heaven.

(b) We wished to associate with the ocean until it lost the pond-like look which it wears to a countryman.

(b) You may go if you will.

* Some writers would omit the commas; but the sense seems to justify their insertion.

VI.

A comma sometimes serves to *distinguish the component parts of a sentence* from one another, and thus to enable the reader more readily to grasp the meaning of the whole. Where, for example, a number of words, which together form the object or one of the objects of a verb, precede the verb, instead of following it, they should be set off by a comma when perspicuity requires one (*a*) ; but not otherwise (*b*). So, too, a subject nominative may be separated from its verb, either because of some peculiarity in the juxtaposition of words at the point where the comma is inserted (*c*), or because of the length and complexity of the subject nominative (*d*) : in the latter case, however, the comma is often omitted.

(*a*) Even the kind of public interests which Englishmen care for, *he* held in very little esteem.

(*a*) To the tender and melancholy recollections of his early days awakened by the death of this loved companion of his *childhood*, *we* may attribute some of the most heartfelt passages in his "Deserted Village."

(*b*) To devout *women* *she* assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies.

(*c*) How much a dunce that has been sent to *roam*,
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home!

(*c*) One truth is clear, Whatever *is*, *is* right.

(*d*) The same modification of our Germanism by another force which seems *Celtic*, *is* visible in our religion.

(d) To allow the slave-ships of a confederation formed for the extension of slavery to come and go free and unexamined between America and the African *coast*, *would* be to renounce even the pretence of attempting to protect Africa against the man-stealer.

(d) Those Presbyterian members of the House of Commons who had many years before been expelled by the *army*, *returned* to their seats.

VII.

A comma is often required to indicate an ellipsis, as where a verb is understood (a); but the comma, if not needed to make the sense clear, may be dispensed with (b).

(a) Its political maxims are invaluable; its exhortations to love of country and to brotherly affection among *citizens*, *touching*.

(a) With a united government, well administered, he saw that we had nothing to fear; and without *it*, *nothing* to hope.

(b) On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the *descents precipitous*, and the *way often* such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dark, from the unenclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides.

(b) Hancock served the cause with his liberal opulence, *Adams* with his incorruptible poverty.

VIII.

Separate from the context *vocative* words or expressions: by one comma, when they occur at the beginning (a) or at the end (b) of a sentence; by two commas, when they occur in the body of a sentence (c).

(a) Mark *Antony*, *here*, take yon Cæsar's body.

(b) What would *you*, *Desdemona*?

(c) Mr. Adams and Mr. Jefferson, fellow-citizens, were successively Presidents of the United States.

(c) I remain, Sir, your obedient servant.

(c) No, Sir, I thank you.

IX.

Separate from the context, in like manner, *adverbial* (a), *participial* (b), or *absolute* (c) expressions, and many *adverbs* and *conjunctions*, especially when they *modify a clause or a sentence as a whole or connect it with another sentence* (d).

(a) The farmers of the neighborhood had made *haste*, as soon as the event of the fight was *known*, to send hogsheads of their best cider as peace-offerings to the victors.

(b) Without attempting a formal definition of the *word*, I am inclined to consider rhetoric, when reduced to a system in books, as a body of rules derived from experience and observation, extending to all communication by language and designed to make it efficient.

(c) To make a long story *short*, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election.

(d) The *pursuers*, too, were close behind.

(d) Finally, let us not forget the religious character of our origin.

"Many words ranked as adverbs are sometimes employed conjunctively, and require a different treatment in their punctuation. When used as conjunctions, *however*, *now*, *then*, *too*, *indeed*, are divided by commas from the context; but when as adverbs, qualifying the words with which they are associated,

the separation should not be made. This distinction will be seen from the following examples:—

1. **HOWEVER.**—We must, *however*, pay some deference to the opinions of the wise, *however* much they are contrary to our own.

2. **NOW.**—I have *now* shown the consistency of my principles; and, *now*, what is the fair and obvious conclusion?

3. **THEN.**—On these facts, *then*, I *then* rested my argument, and afterwards made a few general observations on the subject.

4. **Too.**—I found, *too*, a theatre at Alexandria, and another at Cairo; but he who would enjoy the representations must not be *too* particular.

5. **INDEED.**—The young man was *indeed* culpable in that act, though, *indeed*, he conducted himself very well in other respects.

When placed at the end of a sentence or a clause, the conjunction *too* must not be separated from the context by a comma; as, ‘I would that they had changed voices *too.*’”*

X.

Separate from the context, in like manner, those relative clauses which are merely *explanatory* of the antecedent, or present an *additional* thought (*a*); but not those which are *restrictive*, that is, which limit or determine the meaning of the antecedent (*b*). (See Campbell’s Rhetoric, p. 255.)

(*a*) At five in the morning of the seventh, *Grey*, *who* had wandered from his friends, was seized by two of the Sussex scouts.

* WILSON’s *Punctuation*, p. 73.

- (b) He did *that which* he feared to do.
- (b) The uproar, the blood, the gashes, the ghastly *figures which* sank down and never rose again, spread horror and dismay through the town.
- (b) Those *inhabitants who* had favored the insurrection expected sack and massacre.

XI.

Put a comma between two words or phrases in *apposition* with each other (*a*), unless they are used as a compound name or a single phrase (*b*). Instead of a comma, the dash [—] alone (*c*), or combined with the comma (*d*), is sometimes used.

- (a) Above all, I should speak of *Washington, the* youthful Virginian colonel.
- (b) On the seventeenth of November, 1558, after a brief but most disastrous reign, *Queen Mary* died.
- (c) *Morgarten — the Thermopylæ of Switzerland — lies by* the little lake of Egeri.
- (c) This point represents a second *thought — an* emendation.
- (d) The two principles of which we have hitherto *spoken, — Sacrifice and Truth.*

XII.

Separate *parenthetic* or *intermediate* expressions from the context by commas (*a*), by dashes alone (*b*) or combined with other stops (*c*), or by parentheses [()] (*d*). The last are less common now than formerly. The dash should not be used too frequently, but is to be preferred to the comma when the latter would cause ambiguity or obscurity, as where the sentence contains a number of commas (*e*).

Brackets [] are used when words not the author's (*f*), or when signs (*g*), are inserted to explain the meaning or to supply an omission.

(*a*) The difference, therefore, between a regiment of the foot guards and a regiment of clowns just *enrolled*, *though* doubtless *considerable*, *was* by no means what it now is.

(*a*) The English of the *North*, or * *Northumbrian*, *has* bequeathed to us few monuments.

(*b*), (*a*) It *will* — *I* am sure it *will* — *more* and *more*, *as* time goes *on*, *be* found good for this.

(*c*) When he was in a *rage*, — *and* he very often was in a *rage*, — *he* swore like a porter.

(*d*) So *far* (*we* are *informed*), *no* communication has been sent by the Turkish to the Egyptian government.

(*d*) *Circumstances* (*which* with some gentlemen pass for *nothing*) *give* in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color and discriminating effect.

(*e*), (*a*) In the insurrection of provinces, either distant or separated by natural *boundaries*, — *more* especially if the inhabitants, differing in religion and language, are rather subjects of the same government than portions of the same *people*, — *hostilities* which are waged only to sever a legal tie may assume the *regularity*, *and* in some measure the *mildness*, *of* foreign war.

(*f*) The chairman of our Committee of Foreign Relations [*Mr. Eppes*], at the time he introduced these amendments to the House, exhibited the true character of this policy.

(*g*) See brackets enclosing the parenthetical sign in XII., line 4.

The principle which requires parenthetical expressions to be set off by marks of punctuation, — a principle underlying VIII., IX., X., and XI., as well as XII., — founded though it is in the obvious utility of separating from the rest of the sentence words which

* "Or" here is not a disjunctive, but has the force of "otherwise called."

interrupt the continuity of thought and can be removed without impairing the grammatical structure, may occasionally be violated to advantage; as, for example, by the omission of commas before and after *though it is*, in the fourth line of this paragraph. So, too, in the first line of XIII., the parenthetical expression, *alone or combined with other stops*, is set off by commas; but in the second line of XII. the same expression is written without the first comma, because by the omission the expression is made to qualify *dashes* only. In *after a brief but most disastrous reign* [XI. (b)], the words *but most disastrous* are parenthetical; but marks of parenthesis can well be spared, the clause is so brief.

XIII.

The dash, alone or combined with other stops, should be used where the construction or the sense is suddenly changed or suspended (*a*); where a sentence terminates abruptly (*b*); where a thought or a word is repeated for emphasis (*c*); in rapid discourse (*d*); where an ellipsis occurs of *namely, that is*, and the like * (*e*), or an omission of words, letters, or figures (*f*); and between a title and the subject-matter (*g*), or the subject-matter and the authority for it (*h*), when both are in the same paragraph.

* The colon or the comma is in such cases sometimes preferred to the dash.

(a) The *man*, — *it* is his system: we do not try a solitary word or act, but his habit.

(a) *Rome*, — *what* was Rome?

(a) To let loose hussars and to bring up artillery, to govern with lighted matches, and to cut, and push, and *prime*, — *I* call this, not vigor, but the sloth of cruelty and ignorance.

(b) Great honor to the Fire-flies! *But* — ! —

(b) “Long, long will I remember your features, and bless God that I leave my noble deliverer united with” —

She stopped short.

(c) I cannot forget that we are men by a more sacred bond than we are *citizens*, — *that* we are children of a common Father more than we are Americans.

(c) What shall become of the *poor*, — *the* increasing Standing Army of the poor?

(d) Hollo! ho! the whole world’s *asleep*! — *bring* out the *horses*, — *grease* the *wheels*, — *tie* on the mail.

(e) This deplorable scene admits of but one *addition*, — *that* we are governed by councils from which a reasonable man can expect no remedy but poison, no relief but death.

(f) In the first place, I presume you will have no difficulty in breaking your word with *Mrs. C* — *y*.

(f) 1874—76.

(g), (h) *Di-á-na*. — *The* usual pronunciation is *Di-án-a*. — **SMART.**

XIV.

Beware of using either commas or periods in the place of semicolons [;] and colons [:]. Long sentences broken only by commas are obscure; a number of short sentences separated by periods convey thought vaguely and in fragments: by either extreme, eye and mind are fatigued.

XV.

Use the semicolon, or very rarely the colon, between *clauses*, one or both of which are *subdivided by a number of commas (a)*.

(a) Death is there associated, not, as in Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and with imperishable *renown*; *not*, as in our humblest churches and churchyards, with every thing that is most endearing in social and domestic charities; but with whatever is darkest in human nature and in human destiny.

XVI.

Use the semicolon (*a*), or less frequently the colon (*b*), *between two clauses*, of which one is connected with the other by a conjunction, such as *for*, *but*, *and*, or *yet*. (See, however, III.)

(a) See last clause of example (*a*), XV.

(a) The very idea of purity and disinterestedness in polities falls into disrepute, and is considered as a vision of hot and inexperienced *men*; *and* thus disorders become incurable, not by the virulence of their own quality, but by the unapt and violent nature of their remedies.

(b) This scheme was, perhaps, the best that could then be *contrived*: *but* it was completely disconcerted by the course which the civil war took.

(b), (a) Ayrshire was Cochrane's *object*: *but* the coast of Ayrshire was now guarded by English *frigates*; *and* the adventurers were under the necessity of running up the estuary of the Clyde to Greenock.

In the last example the distinction between the colon and the semicolon is skilfully observed. The

connection of thought between the first clause and the second being less close than that between the second and the third, a colon is used in the former case, a semicolon in the latter.

XVII.

Use semicolons (*a*) or colons (*b*) — choosing the one or the other, according as the connection of thought is more or less close — to *connect in form successive short sentences* which are, though but slightly, connected in sense.

(*a*) Such was our situation: and such a satisfaction was necessary to prevent recourse to *arms*; *it* was necessary toward laying them *down*; *it* will be necessary to prevent the taking them up again and again.

(*a*) Mark the destiny of crime. It is ever obliged to resort to such *subterfuges*; *it* trembles in the broad *light*; *it* betrays itself in seeking concealment.

(*b*) Very few faults of architecture are mistakes of honest *choice*: *they* are almost all hypocrisies.

(*b*) The same may be said of the classical *writers*: *Plato*, Aristotle, Lucretius, and Seneca, as far as I recollect, are silent on the subject.

XVIII.

Use semicolons between *expressions in a series which have a common dependence* upon words at the beginning (*a*) or at the end (*b*) of a sentence.

(*a*) You could give us no commission to wrong or oppress, or even to suffer any kind of oppression or wrong, on any

grounds whatsoever: not on political, as in the affairs of *America*; not on commercial, as in those of *Ireland*; not in civil, as in the laws for *debt*; not in religious, as in the statutes against Protestant or Catholic dissenters.

(a) They forget that, in England, not one shilling of paper-money of any description is received but of *choice*; that the whole has had its origin in cash actually *deposited*; and that it is convertible, at pleasure, in an instant, and without the smallest loss, into cash again.

(b) The ground strowed with the dead and the *dying*; the impetuous *charge*; the steady and successful *repulse*; the loud call to repeated *assault*; the summoning of all that is manly to repeated *resistance*; a thousand bosoms freely and fearlessly bared in an instant to whatever of terror there may be in war and death;—all these you have witnessed, but you witness them no more.

XIX.

Use colons between two *members* of a sentence, each of which is composed of two or more *clauses* separated by semicolons (a): thus you will indicate the relations which the several parts of the sentence bear to one another.

(a) Early reformed are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformed are terms imposed upon a conquered *enemy*: early reformed are made in cool blood; late reformed are made under a state of inflammation.

(a) We are seldom tiresome to ourselves; and the act of composition fills and delights the mind with change of language and succession of *images*: every couplet when produced is new; and novelty is the great source of pleasure.

XX.

The colon is used before *particulars formally stated* (*a*) ; the colon (*b*), the comma (*c*), or the dash combined with the colon (*d*) or with the comma (*e*), before *quotations* indicated by marks of quotation [“ ”] or [‘ ’], — the single point usually marking a quotation within a quotation (*f*). If the quotation depends directly on a preceding word, no stop is required (*g*).

(*a*) So, then, these are the two virtues of *building*: *first*, the signs of man's own good work; *secondly*, the expression of man's delight in work better than his own.

(*b*) Toward the end of your letter, you are pleased to *observe*: “*The rejection of a treaty, duly negotiated, is a serious question, to be avoided whenever it can be without too great a sacrifice.*”

(*c*) When the repast was about to commence, the major-domo, or steward, suddenly raising his wand, said *aloud*, “*Forbear! — Place for the Lady Rowena.*”

(*d*) Alice folded her hands, and *began* : —

“*You are old, Father William,*” the young man said.

(*e*) Silas answered with some *constraint*, — “*Sir, I've a deal to thank you for.*”

(*f*) Coleridge sneered at “*the cant phrase ‘made a great sensation.’*”

(*g*) The common people raised the cry of “*Down with the bishops.*”

(*g*) It declares that “*war exists by the act of Mexico.*”

XXI.

At the end of every *complete sentence* put a period [.], if the sentence affirms or denies; a note

of interrogation [?], if the sentence asks a direct question ; a note of exclamation [!], if the sentence is exclamatory. Interrogation or exclamation points are also used in the body of a sentence when two or more interrogations (*a*) or exclamations (*b*) are closely connected together.

(*a*) For what is a body, but an aggregate of *individuals*? and what new right can be conveyed by a mere change of name?

(*b*) How he could *trot*! how he could run!

XXII.

Periods are used after abbreviations (*a*), after headings and sub-headings (*b*), and before decimals (*c*). In this last case, the period is, in English (and in some American) books, put above the line (*d*). Commas are used before every three figures (counted from the right) when there are more than three (*e*), except in dates (*f*).

(*a*) If gold were depreciated one-half, *3l.* would be worth no more than *1l. 10s.* is now.

(*a*) To retain such a lump in such an orbit requires a pull of *1 lb. 6 oz. 51 grs.*

(*b*) *241. Omission of Thou.*

(*c*) This gives 11.93 lbs. of ice-cold water made to boil with 1 lb. of the fuel.

(*d*) On the system of equal temperament, if C is denoted by 1, E is denoted by 1.25992, and G by 1.49831.

(*e*), (*f*) The amount of stock issued by the several States, for each period of five years since 1820, is as follows, viz.:—

From 1820-1825 somewhat over \$12,000,000.			
„ 1825-1830 „ „ 13,000,000.			
„ 1830-1835 „ „ 40,000,000.			
„ 1835-1840 „ „ 109,000,000.			

XXIII.

The apostrophe ['] is used to denote the elision of a letter or letters (*a*), or of a figure or figures (*b*) ; to distinguish the possessive case (*c*) ; and to form certain plurals (*d*). The apostrophe should not be used with the pronoun *its* (*e*).

- (*a*) '*Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle !*
- (*b*) Since that time it has been re-observed on every subsequent revolution,—in '22, '25.
- (*c*) *Spenser's* adulation of her beauty may be extenuated.
- (*c*) The Seven Years' war was carried on in America.
- (*d*) Mark all the *a's* in the exercise.
- (*d*) Surely long *s's* (*f*) have, like the Turks, had their day.
- (*e*) Its [not *it's*] length was twenty feet.

XXIV.

The hyphen [-] is used to join the constituent parts of many compound (*a*) and derivative (*b*) words ; and to divide words, as at the end of a line (*c*).

- (*a*) The *incense-breathing* morn.
- (*a*) He wears a *broad-brimmed, low-crowned* hat.
- (*b*) The *Vice-President* of the United States.
- (*c*) See under XX., (*b*) *ques-tion*, (*c*) *For-bear*.

CAPITAL LETTERS.

I.

EVERY sentence opening a paragraph or following a period, and every line in poetry, should begin with a capital letter.

II.

Every *direct quotation*, formally introduced, should begin with a capital letter (*a*).

(*a*) See (*b*), (*c*), under XX. p. 19.

III.

A capital letter should begin every word which *is, or is used as, a proper name*. We should write England, not england ; the American Indian, not the american indian ; Shylock, not shylock ; the White Star Line, not the white star line ; the Bible, not the bible. We should distinguish between the popes and Pope Pius Ninth ; between the constitution of society and the Constitution of the United States ; between the reformation of a man's character and the Reformation of Luther ; between a revolution in

politics and the Revolution of 1688 ; between republican principles and the principles of the Republican party : the foundation of the distinction in each case being, that a word, *when used as a proper name, should begin with a capital letter.* Good authors do not uniformly follow this rule ; but most departures from it probably originate in their own or their printers' inadvertence, rather than in their intention to ignore a useful principle, or needlessly to create exceptions to it.

IV.

Capital letters exclusively are used in titles of books or chapters ; they are used more freely in prefaces or introductions than in the body of the work ; and they (or *Italics*) may be used in order to emphasize words of primary importance. For purposes of emphasis, they should, however, be used with great caution : to insist too frequently upon emphasis is to defeat its object.

V.

Phrases or clauses, when separately numbered, should each begin with a capital letter (*a*).

(*a*) The government possesses three different classes of powers : 1st, Those necessary to enable it to accomplish all the declared objects; 2d, Those specially devolved on the nation at large; 3d, Those specially delegated.

VI.

“O” should always be written as a capital letter (*a*) : “oh” should not be so written, except at the beginning of a sentence (*b*).

- (*a*) Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, *O* Sea!
- (*b*) But *oh*, the madness of my high attempt
Speaks louder yet !

VII.

In a letter, the first word after the address should begin with a capital. It is usually printed, in order to save space, on the same line with the address, but should be written on the line below. In the address, *Sir* should always begin with a capital letter ; and the weight of good usage favors *Friend*, *Father*, *Brother*, *Sister*, both as being titles of respect and as emphatic words, rather than *friend*, *father*, *brother*, *sister*, unless the address is in the body of the letter. The affectionate or respectful phrase at the end of a letter should begin with a capital.

NEW YORK, 25 Jan. 1875.

My dear Sir, —

Your esteemed favor of the 22d ult. gave me the most sensible pleasure.

Your obedient servant,

Mr. C. D., Boston.

A. B

SEPT. 29, 1875.

My dear Friend,

Your favor of the 1st November has just come to hand. Whatever sweet things may be said of me, there are not less said of you.

Yours faithfully,

X. Y.

To the Editor of The ——:—

Sir: The "great mercy" in Ohio is doubtless a cause for great rejoicing on the part of all honest men.

L. H. B.

WEST S——, MASS., Oct. 16, 1875.

NEW YORK, Oct. 28, 1875.

The Honorable —— and Others:

Gentlemen — Your favor of the 26th instant is received, asking me to speak next Monday at Faneuil Hall upon the political issues of to-day. Thanking you for its courteous terms, I accept your invitation, and am

Very truly yours,

S. L. W.

WEATHERSFIELD, 20 May, '75.

I am here, my dear brother, having arrived last evening.

Affectionately yours,

C. W.

It will be observed that in these examples the marks of punctuation between the address and the body of the letter differ. Some prefer a comma, some a colon, some the comma with a dash, or the colon with a dash: the dash alone is to be discouraged.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXTRACTS.

[From GEORGE ELIOT's *Middlemarch*. William Blackwood & Sons : Edinburgh and London. 1871.]

THIS was the physiognomy of the drawing-room into which Lydgate was shown ; and there were three ladies to receive him, who were also old-fashioned, and of a faded but genuine respectability : Mrs. Farebrother, the * Vicar's white-haired mother, befrilled and kerchiefed with dainty cleanliness, upright, quick-eyed, and still under seventy ; Miss Noble, her sister, a tiny old lady of meeker aspect, with frills and kerchief decidedly more worn and mended ; and Miss Winifred Farebrother, the * Vicar's elder sister, well-looking like himself, but nipped and subdued as single women are apt to be who spend their lives in uninterrupted subjection to their elders. Lydgate had not expected to see so quaint a group : knowing simply that Mr. Farebrother was a bachelor, he had thought of being ushered into a snuggeries where the chief furniture would probably be books and collections of natural objects.

* There seems to be no sufficient reason for writing this word with a capital.

[FROM IRVING'S *Oliver Goldsmith*. New York: G. P. Putnam. 1851.]

Oliver Goldsmith was born on the 10th of November, 1728, at the hamlet of Pallas, or Pallasmore, county of Longford, in Ireland. He sprang from a respectable, but by no means a thrifty stock. Some families seem to inherit kindness and incompetency, and to hand down virtue and poverty from generation to generation. Such was the case with the Goldsmiths. "They were always," according to their own accounts, "a strange family; they rarely acted like other people; their hearts were in the right place, but their heads seemed to be doing any thing but what they ought."—"They were remarkable," says another statement, "for their worth, but of no cleverness in the ways of the world." Oliver Goldsmith will be found faithfully to inherit the virtues and weaknesses of his race.

From R. W. EMERSON'S *Society and Solitude*. Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co. 1870.]

Next to the knowledge of the fact and its law is method, which constitutes the genius and efficiency of all remarkable men. A crowd of men go up to Faneuil Hall; they are all pretty well acquainted with the object of the meeting; they have all read the facts in the same newspapers. The orator possesses no information which his hearers have not;

yet he teaches them to see the thing with his eyes. By the new placing, the circumstances acquire new solidity and worth. Every fact gains consequence by his naming it, and trifles become important. His expressions fix themselves in men's memories, and fly from mouth to mouth. His mind has some new principle of order. Where he looks, all things fly into their places. What will he say next? Let this man speak, and this man only.

[From J. S. MILL'S *Dissertations and Discussions*. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1873.]

Is there, then, no remedy? Are the decay of individual energy, the weakening of the influence of superior minds over the multitude, the growth of charlatanerie,* and the diminished efficacy of public opinion as a restraining power,—are these the price we necessarily pay for the benefits of civilization? and can they only be avoided by checking the diffusion of knowledge, discouraging the spirit of combination, prohibiting improvements in the arts of life, and repressing the further increase of wealth and of production? Assuredly not. Those advantages which civilization cannot give—which in its uncorrected influence it has even a tendency to destroy—may yet co-exist with civilization; and it

* *Charlatanry* is the preferable form.

is only when joined to civilization that they can produce their fairest fruits. All that we are in danger of losing we may preserve, all that we have lost we may regain, and bring to a perfection hitherto unknown; but not by slumbering, and leaving things to themselves, no more than by ridiculously trying our strength against their irresistible tendencies: only by establishing counter-tendencies, which may combine with those tendencies, and modify them.

[From DANIEL WEBSTER's *Works*. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1866.]

Finally, Gentlemen, there was in the breast of Washington one sentiment so deeply felt, so constantly uppermost, that no proper occasion escaped without its utterance. From the letter which he signed in behalf of the Convention when the Constitution was sent out to the people, to the moment when he put his hand to that last paper in which he addressed his countrymen, the Union,—the Union was the great object of his thoughts. In that first letter he tells them that, to him and his brethren of the Convention, union appears to be the greatest interest of every true American; and in that last paper he conjures them to regard that unity of government which constitutes them one people as the very palladium of their prosperity and safety, and the secu-

rity of liberty itself. He regarded the union of these States less as one of our blessings, than as the great treasure-house which contained them all. Here, in his judgment, was the great magazine of all our means of prosperity; here, as he thought, and as every true American still thinks, are deposited all our animating prospects, all our solid hopes for future greatness. He has taught us to maintain this union, not by seeking to enlarge the powers of the government, on the one hand, nor by surrendering them, on the other; but by an administration of them at once firm and moderate, pursuing objects truly national, and carried on in a spirit of justice and equity.

[From MACAULAY'S *History of England*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans. 1849.]

When this had been done * it would be impossible for our rulers to misunderstand the law: but, unless something more were done, it was by no means improbable that they might violate it. Unhappily the Church had long taught the nation that hereditary nonarchy, alone among our institutions, was divine and inviolable; that the right of the House of Commons to a share in the legislative power was a right merely human, but that the right of the King to the

* Some writers would insert a comma here.

obedience of his people was from above; that the Great Charter was a statute which might be repealed by those who had made it, but that the rule which called the princes of the blood royal to the throne in order of succession was of celestial origin, and that any Act of Parliament inconsistent with that rule was a nullity.

[From THOMAS CARLYLE'S *Inaugural Address*, in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. New York: Scribner, Welford, & Co. 1872.]

Finally, Gentlemen, I have one advice to give you, which is practically of very great importance, though a very humble one. In the midst of your zeal and ardor,—for such, I foresee, will rise high enough, in spite of all the counsels to moderate it that I can give you,—remember the care of health. I have no doubt you have among you young souls ardently bent to consider life cheap, for the purpose of getting forward in what they are aiming at of high; but you are to consider throughout, much more than is done at present, and what it would have been a very great thing for me if I had been able to consider, that health is a thing to be attended to continually; that you are to regard that as the very highest of all temporal things for you [*Applause*]. There is no kind of achievement you could make in the world

that is equal to perfect health. What to it are nuggets and millions? The French financier said, "Why, is there no sleep to be sold!" Sleep was not in the market at any quotation [*Laughter and applause*].

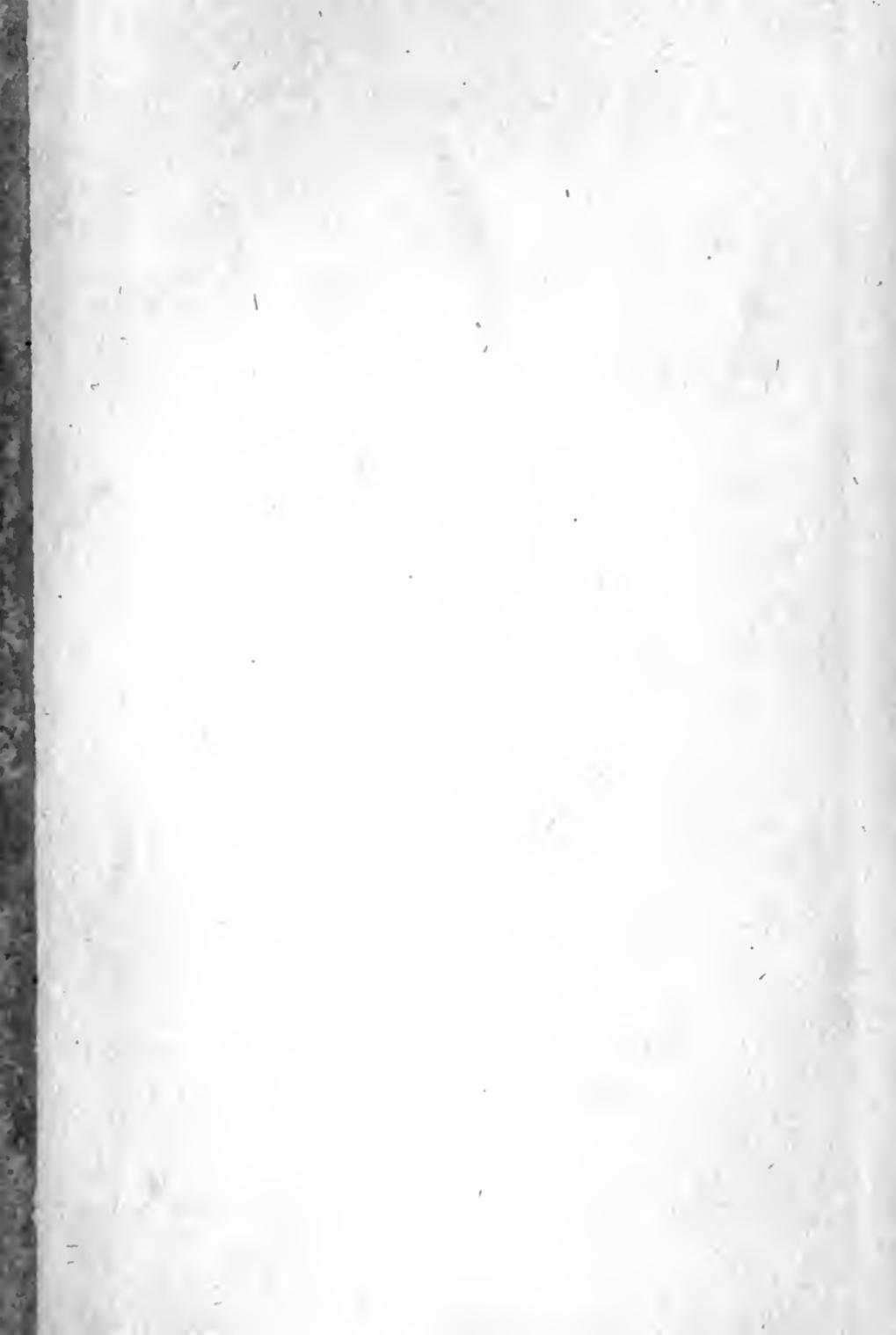
[From HAWTHORNE'S *Blithedale Romance*. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co. 1875.]

"You mistake the matter completely," rejoined Westervelt.

"What, then, is your own view of it?" I asked.

"Her mind was active, and various in its powers," said he. "Her heart had a manifold adaptation; her constitution an infinite buoyancy, which (had she possessed only a little patience to await the reflux of her troubles) would have borne her upward, triumphantly, for twenty years to come. Her beauty would not have waned — or scarcely so, and surely not beyond the reach of art to restore it — in all that time. She had life's summer all before her, and a hundred varieties of brilliant success. What an actress Zenobia might have been!"

[Those who wish to pursue the study of Punctuation in detail are referred to the Treatise of MR. JOHN WILSON. Woolworth, Ainsworth, & Co.: New York. 1871.]





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General rules for
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of capital letters

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